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ERRATUM SHEET

Evaluation of the Economic Costs and Benefits of Methods for Reducing Nutrient Loads to the Gulf of Mexico

Topic 6 Report for the Integrated Assessment on Hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico

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The back of this page provides revised text for the first paragraph of Section 2.2.1.1 The Clean Water Act

2.2 POLICY SETTING

2.2.1 Water Quality Laws

2.2.1.1 THE CLEAN WATER ACT

In fall of 1997, Vice President Gore directed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to collaborate in preparing a Clean Water Action Plan to implement the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended. The general goal of that parent legislation is to achieve "fishable and swimmable waters" for all Americans. Twenty-six years later, much remains to be done. Approximately 40%, or 18,000, of those water bodies tested are still out of compliance with that goal. A 1994 report to Congress (USEPA, 1994a) indicated that 23% of river impairments, 43% of lake impairments, and 47% of estuarine impairments were caused by nutrient enrichment. Two years later, the 1996 *National Water Quality Inventory* (USEPA 1998a) reported even higher levels of nutrient impairment: 40% of impaired rivers, 51% of impaired lakes, and 57% of impaired estuaries. Agriculture was identified as the most widespread source of pollutants, followed by municipal sewer systems and urban storm-water runoff. While point sources have been largely controlled, nonpoint pollution from agricultural, suburban, and urban sources remains the most challenging national water quality problem.